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SUBJECT: P-5 HOLD UN CONSULTATIONS MARCH 2 IN MOSCOW

Classified By: Minister-Counselor for Political Affairs Kirk Augustine.
For Reasons 1.4 (B/D).

[¶1.](#) (C) Summary: Russia hosted a meeting of P-5 IO Directors March 2 in Moscow to discuss UN Security Council and management reforms, the proposed Human Rights Council, the Peacebuilding Commission, and other issues related to implementation of the World Summit Outcome Document, as well as appointment of a new Secretary General and revitalization of the UNSC Military Staff Committee. The group also reviewed UN Security Council action in the Middle East, Iran, Iraq, Kosovo, Syria/Lebanon, Cyprus, and Africa. End Summary.

[¶2.](#) (C) Assistant Secretary Kristen Silverberg represented the United States. Russian MFA International Organizations Department Director Aleksandr Konuzin represented the Russian side and served as host. Stephen Pattison, Director for International Security in the Foreign Office, represented the UK. The French representative was Sylvie Bermann, Director of the French MFA's Department of United Nations and International Organizations. China was represented by newly appointed MFA International Organizations and Conferences Department Director Wu Hailun. After consultations with Konuzin, the group met briefly with Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Aleksandr Yakovenko.

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REGULARIZING P-5 MEETINGS

[¶3.](#) (C) Russia's Konuzin began by noting the importance of a P-5 meeting to assess progress following the 2005 World Summit. He suggested regularizing such consultations at the policy level, with one meeting per year in New York during the UNGA and another in February to assess UNGA outcomes. A/S Silverberg welcomed the idea and offered to host the next session in New York during this year's UNGA. France's Bermann also agreed and proposed holding the subsequent session in Paris next February.

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HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

[¶4.](#) (C) Konuzin said Russia was prepared to be flexible concerning the draft Human Rights Council text, but harbored a number of concerns. Russia did not support a mandatory five-year review of the Council, but felt that after five years the UN could decide whether a review was required. Russia opposed a two-term limit on membership as contrary to the UN's universality principle, and was prepared to put this point to a vote if it were included in the text. Konuzin said Russia opposed country-specific resolutions, and was also uncomfortable with the provision for suspension of members, since the basis for it was unclear. Russia was flexible on the number of sessions the Council should hold; the idea of having three sessions within a ten-week period was acceptable. Special sessions were also acceptable, in Russia's view, but should require more than a one-third vote.

While changing the format of the UN's human rights body was important, Konuzin argued, it must be accompanied by changes in the substance of the body's work.

15. (C) China believed that human rights reform was needed to end politicization of the issue in the UN context, Wu said. The new draft resolution on the Council should be further improved, Wu argued, although China would accept that resolution if it enjoyed consensus. It was particularly important for the P-5 itself to reach consensus as soon as possible. China would accept holding a Human Rights Commission session this year, and was flexible on its format.

France's Bermann said the current proposal regarding the Human Rights Council was a compromise and needed further improvement. It was essential to be able to suspend Council members if they did not respect human rights. She urged avoiding a vote on the HRC at all costs for the moment, as it was more important to broaden support around one position. UNGA President Eliasson's formulation on membership was not acceptable, and the issue still needed to be properly addressed.

16. (C) A/S Silverberg noted that Secretary Rice had called SYG Annan to underscore that the U.S. did not support the current proposal regarding the Human Rights Council. The U.S. would not compromise further on the important principle that members of the HRC share a good-faith commitment to human rights. The U.S. supported changes to the text to exclude countries under UNSC sanctions from HRC membership, and establish a two-thirds vote requirement for election to membership. The U.S. was open-minded whether to engage in member state negotiations or delay consideration of the proposal, A/S Silverberg said, but was prepared to call for a vote and vote no.

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SECURITY COUNCIL REFORM

17. (C) Konuzin said Russia believed any decision on Council reform should be based on the maximum possible agreement among member states, which he interpreted to mean "much more than two-thirds." In any case, he said, now was not a good time to vote on a Council reform resolution since it would only be divisive. Noting that Japan had not joined the other G-4 countries in sponsoring this year's UNGA resolution on Council expansion, Konuzin asked whether this was a strategic or tactical maneuver by the Japanese. He said Russia had "suspensions," but was not asked to elaborate. Konuzin said he was unclear on the specific elements of Japan's proposal, but asserted that Russia could not agree to the kind of elections foreseen by the Japanese because it would create an "uncontrollable situation" and the process would become "ridiculous."

18. (C) Bermann said reform of the Security Council was essential to fully reform the UN. The HRC and management reform should come first but the P-5 should continue to work on the issue. France thought the G-4 plan was "fair and equitable," but the Japanese plan would be very difficult to implement. A/S Silverberg stated the U.S. favored modest Security Council expansion, and believed Japan had the qualifications to be a valuable member of that body. She noted the U.S. had concerns with Japan's "Option C," and remained opposed to the G-4 plan. Wu argued further consultation was needed on Security Council reform, but it was essential to avoid holding "forced" votes that would damage solidarity among UN members. The P-5 should encourage "democratic dialogue and consultation" and not take action that surprised other members.

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MANAGEMENT REFORM

19. (C) Konuzin stressed the importance of management reform but noted that it should not be allowed to change the nature of the UN as an organization of member states. Russia was flexible with regard to giving the SYG more authority, and "reasonably flexible" on budgetary and staffing issues, but

believed new mechanisms should be laid out to foster efficiency and accountability, and should not take away the oversight authority of the Member States. Russia opposed voting on budget packages, believing each programmatic element of the budget should be considered separately. Russia favors mandate review, but understands G77 sensitivities in the matter and believed it was important to work with those countries. Konuzin said Russia did not favor linking progress on reform with consideration of the current UN budget. Russia needed more information on the financial implications of changes to the contracting system but stressed that in any case, the issue needed additional consideration in the Fifth Committee. The Russians were reluctant to establish a strong Deputy SYG, since that would not be in line with the UN Charter. The system under which a SYG is elected and is allowed to fill all his functions should be preserved, Konuzin argued.

¶10. (C) Wu said China believed Secretariat reform should preserve the nature of the UN as a body of governments. Internal management of the Secretariat needed to be strengthened. Wu argued that it was essential for the P-5 countries to remain in close touch on management reform to avoid surprising one another.

¶11. (C) A/S Silverberg agreed with Konuzin's point that decisions on mandates must be made by member states. Concern about specific mandate proposals might be eased when their details were laid out, A/S Silverberg said. The U.S. was not supporting this effort primarily as a cost saving exercise, but believed change was vital so that funds would be devoted to priority areas.

¶12. (C) Pattison argued that management reform was too important to leave to the Fifth Committee. He said the issue did not involve an attempt by the P-5 to gain more power but was a real effort to make the UN work better. Pattison saw the SYG paper on system coherence as important, particularly because of the inefficiencies caused by competition among UN agencies. Bermann believed it essential to persuade G-77 countries that management reform was in their interests.

REVITALIZATION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

¶13. (C) Konuzin argued that the Security Council was a victim of its own success, which led elected members to bring issues to the Council that did not belong there, under the guise that they were related to conflicts ("(blank) and conflict"). He felt "proud" that the P-5 have resisted this trend. Konuzin then added he understood the U.S. reasons for calling Council meetings on PKO management issues, but the Council "should be cautious about this kind of thing." Konuzin put forth an "idea" that "instead of being on the defensive," the P-5 should make proposals for GA revitalization by looking at the Security Council agenda for issues that could be given to the GA, and by encouraging the GA President to hold more discussions on political issues. A/S Silverberg responded that the U.S. believed PKO-related matters such as sexual exploitation and procurement scandals were well within the Council's mandate. For the U.S., adequate Council oversight was key to responding to domestic issues concerning the justification of PKO expenditures.

¶14. (C) Wu stressed that clear divisions existed between the roles and responsibilities of the Security Council and the General Assembly, and these should be respected to avoid duplication. The Security Council's authority must be maintained, but the roles of other countries must also be taken into account. Above all, Wu argued, the interests of developing countries must be kept in mind.

PEACEBUILDING COMMISSION

¶15. (C) Bermann said the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) represents the result of lessons learned about coordination on institution building. The PBC needs to be well-funded and

have links to the IFIs. The Council needed to ensure that the PBC begins its work with a success that would establish its bona fides. This means not taking on too much at once, perhaps only one or two countries. Haiti might be too difficult but Burundi might provide better chances for success. Wu said the P-5 should be flexible regarding the rules of election to the PBC, and should give due consideration to the views of Asian countries.

¶16. (C) A/S Silverberg noted that it was important to have moderate expectations about the Commission. The PBC needs to show early success by taking on manageable countries such as Burundi or perhaps Liberia. Pattison offered Sierra Leone as another possibility for initial PBC action. Konuzin noted that Guinea-Bissau had been raised as a possible focus for the PBC, but agreed Burundi might be more appropriate, although its government was showing signs of reluctance.

OTHER OUTCOME DOCUMENT ISSUES

¶17. (C) Russia's Konuzin expressed satisfaction that the World Summit Outcome Document would help strengthen the UN. The Document had emerged as the common denominator of discussions in New York, and though it did not fully reflect the views of any single member state, it was acceptable to almost all of them. Wu said the Outcome Document was of prime importance but should be implemented step-by-step beginning with easy issues. Work on counterterrorism at the UN must take into account the concerns of developing countries. China favors a high-level counterterrorism conference and enhanced consultations on the draft Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism (CCIT). The UN should agree "as soon as possible" on a definition of terrorism in the CCIT. UK's Pattison said it was time to redevelop the "habit" of P-5 consultation. He agreed with the Chinese point on defining terrorism. Pattison said the UK considered the Duty to Protect a very important element of the Summit outcome, as it was becoming increasingly central to the Security Council's work. More broadly, Pattison continued, the Outcome Document reflected the evolving nature of conflicts and a corresponding extension of the Security Council's agenda. Whereas once the Council had focused on relations between states, it now focused on intrastate conflicts, Pattison argued, which made non-traditional issues such as women's concerns relevant to the Council's work.

SYG APPOINTMENT

¶18. (C) China's Wu presented four points: the new SYG should be capable; the UN should follow the accepted principle of regional rotation, under which it was Asia's turn -- the P-5 should agree that Asian candidates would "have priority"; September/October was a good time frame for making a selection; and P-5 unity was important since the P-5 have "special responsibilities" in the selection process. Acknowledging current disagreements among the P-5, he said P-5 members should at minimum try to find an Asian who would be acceptable. Konuzin agreed on the need to respect the tradition of regional rotation. When SYG Annan had been chosen, the African and Asian blocs had agreed that Asia would provide the next SYG. Those two blocs contained some 100 countries, and while not all might agree to an Asian SYG now, the majority no doubt did. In Konuzin's view, this served as an additional argument for choosing an Asian SYG. A/S Silverberg reiterated that the U.S. does not accept the rotation principle. She asked about unity within the Asian bloc on the issue. Wu replied that all Asian countries favored an Asian SYG, and that the ASEAN countries agreed that an ASEAN candidate should be selected.

¶19. (C) Pattison raised the possibility of establishing criteria for choosing the next SYG, which would give a sense the selection process was being conducted with maximum transparency. Criteria might include experience in running a large organization, a prominent international profile, and experience in international affairs. Bermann echoed

Pattison's view on the desirability of demonstrating transparency in the selection process, and suggested looking at procedures used by the WTO or other comparable models.

¶20. (C) A/S Silverberg noted that although she agreed with Pattison's criteria, intangible factors inevitably came into play, and any criteria would be at a level of generality that would make them unlikely to be useful. She also stressed that setting criteria could have unintended future consequences. Konuzin shared A/S Silverberg's concerns about specific criteria. If the P-5 agreed to criteria, other groups might put forth their own, less desirable criteria, he continued. The key was to avoid deadlocks, and the P-5 should work to reach internal agreement.

¶21. (C) On the question of timing for SYG selection, Konuzin dismissed concern that reaching consensus too early would make SYG Annan a lame duck. Wu argued for a September-October time frame to choose the new SYG. Konuzin responded that this would only ensure that the next UNGA session would be preoccupied with the succession issue and would make no progress in other areas. Konuzin urged maximum flexibility on timing, but said that as soon as general agreement emerged about a successor to Annan, a vote should be taken quickly to avoid additional candidacies.

MILITARY STAFF COMMITTEE (MSC) REVITALIZATION

¶22. (C) A/S Silverberg laid out U.S. arguments for revitalizing the MSC: The Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) presents UN members with too few options and frequently fails to adequately justify its requests. For this reason, outside military advice would be beneficial. A/S Silverberg added that Congress, and no doubt other legislatures, often question funding for UN peacekeeping operations, and a revitalized MSC would help address those concerns. She urged close P-5 consultation and said the U.S. would welcome participation of member states outside the P-5.

Bermann said France agreed with the U.S. concerns but not with institutionalizing the MSC. She questioned the need to create another layer of decision-making and questioned the value of input from member states outside the P-5, even if they had military expertise. Pattison said that while DPKO sometimes produced useful advice, it could be improved, however the MSC was not necessarily the answer. Konuzin expressed enthusiasm for the U.S. initiative and welcomed that it had been initially raised in the P-5 context. Agreeing with Pattison that the DPKO sometimes offered useful advice, Konuzin said that in other cases, such as on the Democratic Republic of Congo, DPKO's advice had been flawed. More cooperation with troop contributing countries would be beneficial, Konuzin argued. Wu said the MSC reflects the P-5's special responsibility, and China could accept P-5 consensus on a revitalized MSC.

MIDDLE EAST/CYPRUS

¶23. (C) Referring to the then-upcoming Hamas delegation visit to Moscow, Konuzin assured his P-5 counterparts that Russia's message would be fully consistent with Quartet principles. A/S Silverberg noted the U.S. does not meet with Hamas, and urges others to avoid meeting with them as well, then underscored that it was essential not to move the Quartet goal posts and to retain Quartet unity. France's Bermann and UK's Pattison echoed that view, with Bermann stressing that a collapse of the Palestinian Authority would pose a risk to Israel. Responding to a question from Konuzin about Sheba Farms, Pattison said the issue should only be brought to the Council if there is a strong prospect for its resolution there.

¶24. (C) Turning to Lebanon/Syria, Pattison argued that the UN needed to keep up pressure to get cooperation from Syria, including on resolution 1559 obligations concerning the investigation of former Lebanese PM Hariri's assassination. Syria must be held to all requirements per Resolution 1636.

Brammertz,s report in mid-March will "force the issue," and the UN must also be prepared to respond to the report by UN Special Envoy Terje Roed-Larsen in April. A/S Silverberg underscored the need to hold Syria to all its obligations, as this was essential to the Security Council's credibility. Bermann agreed on the need to keep pressure on Syria, "but let,s see the reports." She noted that Larsen must be able to return to the region before completing his report.

¶25. (C) Konuzin questioned the need for additional pressure on Syria, and said member states should not interfere in the Brammertz investigation. Russia believes action on Resolution 1559 must be carried out in the context of the political dialogue in Lebanon. That dialogue was not going well, Konuzin argued, but should be encouraged nonetheless. Wu, noting progress made by the SYG, argued that the investigation must respect the views of the parties and others, including the Arab League. China supported a diplomatic solution; the focus of 1559 should remain on the investigation.

¶26. (C) Pattison raised the issue of Cyprus, asserting that no progress had been made since the Annan Report. Inaction would only worsen the problem, he said, arguing for a "new look" from the P-5 and the Security Council. However, he added, no further steps should be taken until after the Greek Cypriot elections in May and UN Under Secretary-General for Political Affairs Gambari's visit in June. The P-5 should focus on making the Gambari visit successful, Pattison said. Konuzin agreed on the importance of finding a solution, but urged caution to avoid repeating previous mistakes and said that no time frames should be imposed. Wu urged a resumption of the SYG's good offices on the issue.

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KOSOVO

¶27. (C) Bermann underlined that P-5 unity on Kosovo was critical, and urged "realism": an even-handed approach and a recognition that Kosovo would not return to Serbia. Konuzin agreed on the importance of P-5 unity, but lamented that some P-5 members are sending messages not consistent with the London agreement. Konuzin embarked on a lengthy discourse stressing that according to the Guiding Principles of the Contact Group, there is no predetermined outcome for Kosovo. However, he said, "some partners" insist independence is the only option, and see the task of the Contact Group only as making Belgrade accept this option. Russia rejected this view, he said.

¶28. (C) Konuzin said the Kosovar Albanians had not delivered on standards. He noted that of 220,000 ethnic Serbs who had left Kosovo, only 12,500 had returned. "This is ethnic cleansing," he declared. Konuzin admitted that ethnic crimes had gone down in Kosovo, however this was because few Serbs remained and those that did were physically separated from the Albanian Kosovars. Konuzin insisted there must be more progress on standards before resolving Kosovo,s final status.

¶29. (C) Konuzin rejected the view that Kosovo could offer no precedent for other conflicts. Rather, he underlined that Kosovo "is a precedent already." As an example, he said Abkhaz leaders have been explicit that they regard Kosovo as precedent. A/S Silverberg countered that the U.S. sees Kosovo as unique, due to the violent disintegration of Yugoslavia and the long-standing UN mandate over the territory. Pattison and Bermann supported the U.S. view.

¶30. (C) Pattison added that status talks needed to start this year precisely to get the Kosovar Albanians moving on standards. This did not represent "status first, standards later," but "standards in the context of status." He argued that only when Kosovar Albanians see the prospect of resolution on status will they address standards. Konuzin reiterated the Russian view in favor of standards before status. He urged again that the P-5 "stick to the Guiding Principles and not prejudge status."

IRAQ

131. (C) Konuzin said the time had come for a new Security Council Iraq resolution to redefine the UN role there. He said the P-5 could agree on enhancing the role of the UN in Iraq. A/S Silverberg agreed the UN needs to have an expanded role in Iraq, but cautioned that it is too early to move forward on a new resolution. The P-5 should wait to consult with the new Iraqi government before proceeding with a new resolution.

132. (C) Konuzin raised the status of UNMOVIC. He said that while post-war inspections had found no WMD in Iraq, danger remains in the form of WMD potential. The Iraqi government does not control former WMD facilities and "we don't know where the Iraqi scientists are." Konuzin said Russia is "anxious" about possible terrorist access to former chemical weapons depots. Some sites formerly under UNMOVIC control have been "penetrated," he said. Konuzin urged that results of inspections carried out by the Iraq Survey Group under Charles Duelfer be shared with UNMOVIC. He noted UNMOVIC needs to determine whether it has completed its mandate, and added that the Iraqis could draw on UNMOVIC's experience to set up their own monitoring mechanisms.

133. (C) A/S Silverberg pointed out that UNMOVIC holds over USD 100 million in Iraqi assets. The Iraqi government has said that it needs these funds for reconstruction. She appealed to the P-5 to expand financial assistance to the Iraqi government through follow-on to Madrid pledges and debt relief. Pattison said Konuzin was correct to raise the question of UNMOVIC's status and the UN role in Iraq. Following the August 2003 bombing of its headquarters in Iraq, the UN was understandably cautious. Iraq is now at a different stage. The UN's role can and should increase once the Security Council "gives the UN a clear role," he said.

134. (C) A/S Silverberg noted that one constraint on the UN in Iraq is the lack of secure airlift capacity for UN personnel. Konuzin noted that UN Special Representative for Iraq Qazi had mentioned this. Konuzin said Russia was prepared to assist financially to provide the UN with airlift in Iraq. A/S Silverberg noted that the matter of finding aircraft with adequate defensive protection for the UN had been a subject of consultation between SYG Annan and President Bush. Wu said China was open to a new Iraq political resolution in the Security Council, and said the time had come to "finish" UNMOVIC.

AFRICA

135. (C) Bermann noted good news and bad news on Africa. On the positive side were Liberia and Burundi, where situations were improving. The situation in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) was also getting better and the outlook for June elections there has improved. She noted France and others in the EU are preparing to lend security support at election time. On the negative side of the ledger was the situation in Cote d'Ivoire, where UN peacekeepers need reinforcements. Sanctions were the right course of action in Cote d'Ivoire, she said, because it was necessary to support the Prime Minister. Now the issue was to reinforce UNOCI. France fully supported the U.S. initiative on Ethiopia/Eritrea including UNMEE downsizing.

136. (C) A/S Silverberg cautioned against pulling out of Liberia too soon. She said any increase of UN peacekeepers in Cote d'Ivoire should come from the UNMEE draw down and not from Liberia. She noted the situation in Darfur was getting worse. It was necessary to press the AU to allow its forces to serve under UN auspices. Pattison agreed but noted it was also necessary to strengthen AU forces to enable them to do this. Konuzin agreed with this point. Wu stressed the need to consult the Government of Sudan on peacekeeping forces. Pattison responded that consultation is necessary but

governments with influence in Khartoum also need to tell the GOS its behavior in Darfur is unacceptable. Non-interference must not be used as a cover for genocide, he said.

¶37. (C) A/S Silverberg also urged P-5 members to encourage economic reforms in Africa by rewarding governments that create positive trade and investment climates, as the U.S. was doing through the Millennium Challenge Corporation. Trade and private investment are keys to development, she said. The UN needs to refocus its programs to encourage these positive changes.

¶38. (C) Pattison mentioned a key problem in the DRC is that the DRC regular army is not being paid. This is especially true for former rebels in Eastern DRC who have been incorporated into the army. On Ethiopia/Eritrea, he said the situation could blow up at any moment. The UN has to be careful about any removal of UN forces from the security zone; "we must maintain some monitoring presence at least," he said. Konuzin added that he was "perplexed" about the Ethiopia/Eritrea situation since it was clearly a personal issue between the two countries, presidents. As with Cote d'Ivoire, he had no idea how to improve the situation. Wu noted China had just given USD 400,000 to AMIS. The Council should listen to the AU and the Government of Sudan on rehatting. Threats of additional sanctions would only do harm. Wu said China could not support extending the arms embargo to the rest of the country.

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IRAN

¶39. (C) The UK's Pattison said El Baradei's March report to the IAEA Board of Governors (BOG) would make clear that Iran has not resolved any of its issues with the IAEA and remains intent on developing nuclear weapons capability. The Security Council needed to move quickly to show Iran that the Council was unified. Pattison proposed the P-5 meet in New York right after the March 6 IAEA Board meeting to discuss the way forward and prepare for UNSC involvement. He stressed moving quickly is the key to limit Iran's opportunity to respond.

¶40. (C) Wu noted that "we have the same purpose: not to allow Iran to have nuclear weapons." However, China favored resolving the issue in the IAEA, not the Security Council. Wu said the IAEA report to the Security Council does not require any UNSC action. He said China supports giving Russia's proposal to conduct enrichment for Iranian reactors in Russia time to work. China favors patience and restraint and is concerned about "escalation of confrontation."

¶41. (C) Konuzin endorsed the Chinese approach. Russia wanted a WMD-free Iran, and the answer was an Iranian moratorium on enrichment by returning to the pre-January 3 status quo. However, Konuzin said Russia is "inclined to keep this matter in the IAEA." He added that he did not think the strategy of Security Council action was thought through. It was not at all clear how referral to the Security Council would resolve the problem, since the Iranians will lash back at UNSC condemnation and only harden their position and defy the UNSC. "What is the next step? Do we have a strategy? Or do we just want to take steps and react to what the Iranians do?" he asked. Konuzin said Russia, for now, will insist on "continuing on the basis of a diplomatic approach instead of a threatening approach" and thus does not favor bringing the matter to the UNSC for action.

¶42. (C) Pattison stressed that "time is not on our side." The EU-3 has been engaged in a diplomatic approach but it has not worked. However, he agreed that Konuzin had raised a fair question in asking about the consequences of going to the Council. The UK's view is that going to the Council will "register with the Iranians" if there is P-5 unity. If the Iranians see division, they will exploit it. P-5 unity at the Council offers the best hope of getting the Iranians to back down. A/S Silverberg and France's Bermann supported this view. A/S Silverberg pointed to the January 30 Political Directors agreement to take up this issue in the

UNSC after March 6.

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VENEZUELA'S SECURITY COUNCIL CANDIDACY

¶43. (C) A/S Silverberg urged the P-5 not to support Venezuela's candidacy for a Security Council seat. She noted that the Security Council must maintain its effectiveness and professionalism, which Venezuela's presence would undermine. France's Berman concurred. Russia and China were non-committal.

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SWISS PROPOSAL ON SECURITY COUNCIL PROCEDURES

¶44. (C) Konuzin solicited opinion on the Swiss proposal on Security Council procedures, which seeks to encourage the Council to make regular reports to the General Assembly as a way of enhancing transparency. Konuzin expressed strong opposition, saying this infringed on Council prerogatives and was thus contrary to the UN Charter. Pattison said the UK also did not want the Swiss proposal to be adopted and did not like the General Assembly "telling the Council how to do its business." However, he said the UK favors sensible reforms to "keep ahead of the criticism." A/S Silverberg and Bermann agreed. Wu said the Council "should improve itself" but any measures should not limit the prerogatives of the P-5. China was open-minded on improving Council transparency, but "any changes must be made by the Council itself."

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DFM YAKOVENKO

¶45. (C) Following the talks, the group met briefly with DFM Yakovenko, who welcomed the opportunity the consultations had provided. He endorsed the idea of regular biannual P-5 meetings that would rotate among the members. The U.S. and UK underlined to Yakovenko the importance of maintaining P-5 unity during discussions of Iran in the Security Council. Yakovenko took this argument on board while noting that negotiations with Iran were ongoing. He also defended Russia's invitation to the Hamas delegation, stressing Moscow's adherence to Quartet principles in its discussions with Hamas. China noted that Iran would be among the "hot topics" the Council would discuss this year and supported the need for P-5 consensus. France raised Syria, urging that Damascus be encouraged to cooperate with the Brammertz investigation.

¶46. (U) Assistant Secretary Silverberg has cleared this message.
RUSSELL